

**I claim:**

1. A method for managing the submission of ideas in an organization,  
comprising:

(a) collecting ideas;

5 (b) entering the collected ideas into an electronic archive accessible through a  
network;

(c) displaying the ideas to members of the organization so that the members  
of the organization can provide additional thoughts to the submission;

(d) providing the ideas to a management screening committee for screening;

10 and

(e) submitting ideas screened by the management screening committee to an  
idea sponsor; and

(f) entering into an opportunity screening phase.

2. The method of claim 1, further including:

15 appointing a process champion to perform step (a).

3. The method of claim 2, wherein step (b) further includes:

providing e-mail notification of idea submissions to the process champion and to  
a chairperson of a management screening committee.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein step (b) further includes:

20 convening a meeting of the management screening committee when justified by  
idea submission volume.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein step (d) including performing exploratory research and development of ideas being screened by the management screening committee.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein step (a) includes:  
5 publicizing the system to all potential submitters;  
planning and holding focus groups and brainstorming sessions to stimulate targeted ideas;  
generating ideas within a management screening committee by combining inputs and secondary research;  
10 gathering information through conventions, trade shows, and customer visits;  
using a knowledge management system to look for field-based development opportunities that can be leveraged into solution deliverables; and  
implementing programs to collect individually submitted ideas.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein step (b) includes:

15 entering ideas into a web-based archive interface.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein step (c) includes:

displaying submitted ideas on an idea submission website to other potential idea submitters and to members of a management screening committee.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein in step (d), the management screening  
20 committee comprises a committee of experienced associates with varying perspectives who screen submitted ideas periodically based on volume and priority of ideas.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein in step (f) the opportunity screening phase comprises the following steps:

(f1) assigning an idea selected by the idea sponsor to an idea owner for research and for completion of process deliverables to convert the submitted idea into a concept;

(f2) contacting the idea submitter for additional input;

5 (f3) presenting concepts to the idea sponsor for ranking and evaluation;

(f4) presenting concepts selected by the idea sponsor to a resource board;

(f5) approving resources for concepts selected by the resource board.

11. A method for idea submission within an organization, comprising:

(a) receiving an idea submission from an Idea Submitter and entering the idea

10 submission into a central database as an archive that is accessible by members of the organization, the archive including searchable fields and a status field indicating the status of the idea submission;

(b) appointing a process champion and a technology evaluation committee chairperson for the idea submission;

15 (c) notifying the process champion and the technology evaluation committee chairperson of the idea submission;

(d) convening a technology evaluation committee to evaluate the idea submission;

(e) referring the idea submission, if found to be promising by the technology  
20 evaluation committee, to an appropriate business group vice president for review and for acceptance or deferral;

(f) communicating review results to the idea shop process champion;

(g) updating the status of the idea submission in the database;

- (h) notifying the idea submitter of the status of the idea submission;
- (i) if the business group vice president chooses to sponsor the submitted idea, appointing an idea owner to research the idea and to convert the idea into a concept;
- (j) if the business solution group vice president approves the concept,
- 5 presenting the idea to a resource board for a concept phase decision point review;
- (k) deciding whether or not to fund subsequent developmental phases for the idea; and
- (l) entering all supporting research, evaluations and presentations into the archive.

10 12. A system for submitting ideas within an organization, comprising:  
a network of personal computers, the network including a central network server computer having a web-based interface, an application interface, and a central idea archive database system,

each personal computer in the network being capable of displaying a display  
15 screen for receiving inputs from an idea submitter,

the central idea archive database system including an electronic archive of all submitted ideas, the archive being accessible at the personal computers in the network, the archive being searchable by keyword for enabling related ideas to be combined at a subsequent time.

20 13. The system of claim 12, wherein the display screen includes data input boxes for receiving inputs from an idea submitter.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein the data input boxes include an idea title box for receiving the title of an idea, an idea category box for receiving an input

identifying a category for the submitted idea, a box for receiving an input identifying related current offers, solutions, or programs, a target industry box for receiving an input identifying a target industry for the submitted idea, an idea summary box for receiving a summary of the submitted idea, and a box for receiving a description of a problem solved  
5 by the submitted idea.